

Staying well during Ramadan

Ramadan is a very special month of the year, a time for fasting, salah and time spent with family. It can also be an opportunity to improve your health.

Fasting has many health benefits, but can be a strain on your body, so it's important to get adequate nutrition, gentle exercise and enough sleep during the month of Ramadan.



Iftar - إفتار

At Iftar, try not to overeat. There is a hadith that prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) said: you should fill your stomach one third with food, one third with drink, and leave one third for air. You can break your fast with water/milk and dates, fruit or fruit juice, providing some natural sugar. Take the time to pray Mahgrib, or have a small break, then eat something light such as soup or dal. These will help to rehydrate your body and are also gentle on your digestive system.

It is easy to overeat after a day of fasting, however eating a light meal gives you the energy to pray and spend time with family. Limit fried, salty and high sugar foods, which can leave you feeling tired and sluggish, and worsen dehydration.

Try to include carbohydrates containing fibre, such as sweet potatoes, buckwheat, lentils, wholegrain bread, and wholegrain rice as these will give you a slow release of energy.

Make sure you drink plenty of water during the evening. Coconut water, fruit juice, lassi and smoothies are also good; but avoid fizzy sugary drinks, as they will not provide any nutrition during this short time.

Prepare and cook food in advance so you can avoid being stuck in the kitchen all day. Ramadan is a time to reflect on what it is like for those less fortunate in the world who often go hungry on a regular basis; keep things simple and don't overburden yourself by cooking an elaborate feast every night.



Suhoor - سحور

It is Sunnah to eat suhoor, and it's important to eat something before beginning your fast; otherwise you're essentially fasting for even longer. Make sure to have water and a light meal or snack. Great examples are wholegrain carbohydrates such as porridge, Weetabix or wholegrain toast; these will fill you up and give you energy to last the day.



Sleep

A good night's sleep is crucial for health and wellbeing, helping to repair our body and mind. During lockdown it may be easier to sleep in a little later, or take a nap during the day. It's not unusual to have less sleep than normal during Ramadan, but remember to make it easier on yourself and find a balance.

Advice for children fasting during Ramadan

Often younger children are very keen to do their first fast, however during summer the days are very long and the weather is hot. Ensure that they drink enough water and eat a proper meal for Iftar and wake them up for suhoor. It may be better to start with fasting part of the day and build up slowly.

Encourage them to take part in other activities such as staying up late to pray taraweeh, learning a new surah, making Eid decorations, or giving to charity.

Eid ul Fitr عيد الفطر

Eid is a day of celebration, and often over indulgence. Enjoy yourself, but remember that your body will not be used to eating, so take it slow to avoid a stomach ache.



Medications

If you, or any member of your family are taking regular medication, or have a long term health condition such as diabetes, talk to your GP, pharmacist or specialist nurse to discuss your options.

Ramadan during Covid-19

We are currently in a very unique time, and it is unlikely that mosques will open before the end of Ramadan. Pray taraweeh at home, and continue to follow social distancing and isolation guidelines.

Why not try a virtual Iftar this year with friends or family using Zoom, WhatsApp, Skype; or take part in a large [communal Iftar](#).

There is a lot of anxiety around the world, however now is the perfect time to make the most of isolation. Focus on prayer, reading the Qur'an and doing good deeds; for example you could take food to elderly neighbours.

